Vol.9 No.1 AUTUMN 1989 ISSN 0953-8763

GAY & LESBIAN HUMANIST

MAGAZINE OF THE
GAY AND LESBIAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION 80p

10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

PRIDE '89

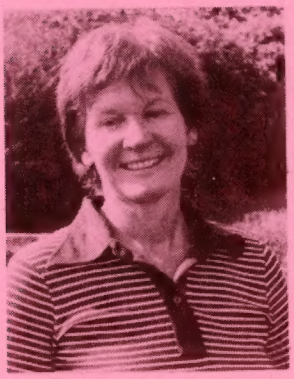
THIS ISSUE: GALHA'S FIRST DECADE, GAY CHRISTIAN'S TORMENT, DUTCH DELIGHTS, WORLD NEWS, MORAL MAJORITY MOUTHINGS, SEEN ON THE SCREEN, BOOK REVIEWS, POSTBAG AND MORE...

GALHA'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

GALHA celebrates its 10th anniversary this year with a reception on 9 September at Conway Hall Humanist Centre. Our president Maureen Duffy will attend and representatives from other gay/Humanist organisations and publications have been invited. Meanwhile a number of messages of congratulation have been arriving at national office in Kenilworth.

Among the messages received are ones from the association's vice-presidents including Claire Rayner, who says: "You're a much needed organisation and I'm delighted you're enjoying such longevity". Sir Angus Wilson (now living in the South of France) sends his "Congratulations and many happy returns", and Brigid Brophy wishes us all "a gay and godless feast"!

Dr James Hemming, a former BHA President, sends his warm congratulations and continues: "The past ten years have been an historic decade for the extension of freedom, in spite of certain setbacks, and you should all feel great satisfaction at the part you have played in this. Let us hope that the next decade will see the sectarian and prudish restrictions on humanity out of the way for good. My best wishes for your contribution to this."



Another GALHA supporter, Humanist, journalist and broadcaster, Angela Willans [pictured], who edits the problem page for Woman's Own magazine, writes: "This decade of campaigning and support for gay rights can't have been easy. There are some grisly challenges. New prejudices and bigotry have crawled out of the woodwork - or maybe it's just the old ones given new acceptance and approval. But you have survived and you're in good heart. I send you my congratulations and my warmest good wishes for the next ten years."

[See Secretary's Round-up for an account of our activities and achievements over the last decade.] <

GAY CHRISTIAN'S TORMENT

GALHA has taken swift action after learning about a "counselling" organisation for lesbians and gays called U-TURN ANGLIA.

This organisation, which is based in Ipswich, was brought to our attention by a reader of Capital Gay who had seen an article written by its Director, George Harvey, in the evangelical Christian newspaper Challenge. Harvey described how his 27-year-old son had committed suicide because he could not reconcile his homosexuality with the teachings of his church and Bible. Harvey had always prided himself that he could spot "one of them" a mile off, but never suspected his own son's gayness until this was revealed by correspondence and a diary found in his car after his death. Harvey then decided to set up a counselling organisation "to help men and women desiring to be free from homosexuality". One of its handouts proclaims 'Join The Exodus! Thousands of men and women are overcoming homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ, YOU CAN TOO! Biblical and clinical evidence says that homosexual behaviour AND orientation can change'.

GALHA chairperson Dan O'Hara, himself an experienced counsellor, wrote a letter of complaint to George Harvey and issued a statement to the gay press and Ipswich media warning of the damage such "counselling" can cause. The statement pointed out that Harvey's righteous indignation when speaking of gays and his view of AIDS as the "judgement of God" were "clearly more than enough to lead a sensitive and tormented young man, who believed himself a 'sinner' facing divine retribution, to the desperate act of suicide. But his son's death has not softened Harvey's judgemental attitudes. It has not caused him to reassess his vile beliefs. Rather it has led him to put the fear of God into many other unhappy gay men and lesbians. He calls this activity 'counselling'! It could lead to further deaths".

U-Turn Anglia is linked to two other notorious Christian "counselling" organisations, Turnabout and True Freedom Trust. GALHA complained about publicity given to the latter some years ago in a religious programme screened by Central Television. In its 'Care & Prayer' leaflet, the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement say "we cannot recommend them".

Send any letters to: U-Turn Anglia, PO Box 138, Ipswich, IP4 4RY. <

CLERICAL VAPOURS

Hanging The President, a play at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival, has been attacked by the Church of Scotland as crossing the bounds of decency.

The play portrays two white men locked in a cell in a South African prison the night before they are due to be hanged and is reported as showing them naked indulging in simulated sexual acts.

The Rev Andrew Maclean, Convenor of the Board of Social Responsibility of the Church of Scotland, said that the play could face prosecution similar to that brought by Mary Whitehouse against The Romans in Britain, a play at the National Theatre which portrayed male rape.

It is hardly surprising of course that Scots clerics should have a fit of the vapours at the sight of gay goings-on in the theatre. The last report on homosexuality issued by the Church of Scotland condemned all gay sex as sinful - even between lifelong partners, branded gay meeting places and organisations as "morally dangerous" and stated categorically that lesbians and gays were a threat to the family way of life. <

GALHA FRIENDS

PRESIDENT:
MAUREEN DUFFY

Vice-Presidents:
Sir Hermann Bondi, Brigid Brophy, Dr. James Hemming, George Melly, Claire Rayner, Dr. Harry Stopes-Roe, Barbara Smoker, Angela Willans, Sir Angus Wilson.

NEW BIBLE NOT SO GAY

The translators of a new version of the bible to be published on 27 September are reported to have been careful about using the word 'gay' and as a sop to "the sexist language lobby", they have made St Paul address his epistles to "brothers and sisters" or "friends", althought the original text's word is admitted to mean "brothers". <

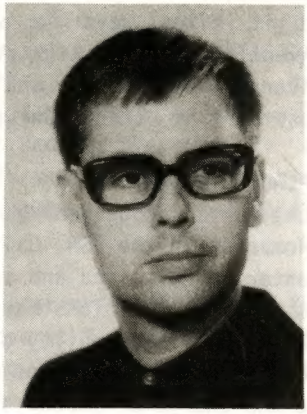
THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Yesterday's avant-garde is today's chic and tomorrow's cliche.

WORLD NEWS

SWEDISH HUMANISTS ACT ON SECTION 28

At the instigation of our member in Goteborg, Sweden, Lars Torstensson [pictured], the Swedish Humanist organisation has sent a letter to the Swedish government requesting its condemnation of Section 28 of the British Local Government Act. The text of the letter has also been sent to the British Home Secretary. The Swedish Humanists say that they believe "all human beings should have the liberty to choose their own style of life. The right to equality and self-determination are fundamental democratic values, which should be defended against all forms of prejudice and discrimination... Section 28 threatens the free information about homosexuality in schools and among the public. It sanctions sexual prejudices and it has caused an increased discrimination against gay people in England. This is against human rights. The Humanist Association requests that the Swedish government condemn Section 28."



IHEU SUCCESS AT UN

A statement on conscientious objection to military service prepared by the Human Rights Project of the International Humanist & Ethical Union was submitted by IHEU's representative James Dilloway to the 45th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva.

A resolution on this matter was sponsored by a wide range of countries and was adopted without a vote. It closely reflected the statement of the IHEU which received early attention and acted as a catalyst in stimulating the resolution. However, the IHEU will continue to press the matter in the future since the present resolution still does not recognise non-religious or ethical and moral motives as grounds for exemption.

FURTHER ACTION ON SECTION 28 BY IHEU

Following the resolution carried at the Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union in America last year condemning Section 28,

this legislation is to be raised by the IHEU representative at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. A six-page statement drawn up for IHEU by GALHA member Kees Waaldijk [pictured] will be circulated to all delegates of non-governmental organisations meeting next January, prior to the presentation of a motion from IHEU condemning Section 28 and other anti-gay laws. The statement presents the section as a dangerous exception to the slow but steady trend in most European countries of recognising lesbian and gay rights as human rights. It also lists instances in which Section 28 has already been invoked by local authorities in the UK to justify discrimination against lesbians and gays and it cites ways in which the Section contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights. Kees Waaldijk lectures in law at the Dutch University of Limburg and also works part time at the Homostudies Department at Utrecht University.

APPEAL TO GALHA

GALHA, as a recognised Humanist organisation, has received an appeal from a Humanist in the USA, Calvin K of Oakknoll. He has admitted he killed a 'hunter' on his land and says he did it in self-defence. He feels that his outspoken opinions may have prejudiced his case to such an extent that he was found guilty of murder whereas a person with conventional views, or one who had not exercised his right to free speech, would have had the charge of murder dismissed.

However, his motives seem to have been assumed in court, rather than proved beyond reasonable doubt, partly from the poor way his defence was handled but also from his reputation for outspokenness. He made an appeal for clemency to the state Governor which was accepted in September 1988 and has still not been adjudicated upon. GALHA Treasurer Roy Saich has written on his behalf to the Governor and to the US ambassador in the UK.

Calvin has written from prison to the American Humanist Association magazine 'Free Mind' in support of gays although not homosexual himself.

DEATH BY STONING ONLY WITH PROOF

The call by the head of the religious affairs committee at Cairo's al-Azar University, Abdullah al-Mashad, for people with AIDS to be killed has been rejected by Egypt's most senior Muslim authority.

The Grand Mufti Sayed Tantawi, who is appointed by the state to issue rulings on religious affairs, has declared that Islam does not permit the killing of AIDS patients.

Abdullah al-Mashad had publicly claimed that Egyptian society had to be "purged" of AIDS patients by denying them food and water, as they threatened "public harm".

Islamic law dictates that individuals may be put to death for homosexual acts, but the Grand Mufti, whose word can be interpreted as law, said that the presence of AIDS was not proof in itself that homosexual acts had taken place. Death by stoning (the hadd) "should not be implemented unless he [the patient] confesses or real proof is presented." <

MORAL MAJORITY MOUTHINGS

The General Secretary of the Professional Association of Teachers, Peter Dawson, has slammed the TV soap EastEnders as "a vile influence on the nation because it projects as normal wholly deviant forms of behaviour such as homosexuality, bad language, crime, infidelity and drunkenness".

Dawson is a sponsor of Family & Youth Concern (formerly known as The Responsible Society) which asserts on its stationery: "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State".

This virulently anti-gay, anti-Humanist organisation, together with its counterpart Christian Action Research Education (founder of the Mildmay Mission Hospice) and the numerous other Christian pressure groups which comprise Britain's 'Moral Majority', were largely responsible for getting Section 28 included in the Local Government Act.

In a reply to a GALHA member who wrote to challenge remarks made by Family and Youth Concern chairman Dr Ellison in a national newspaper, Ellison asserts: "There is considerable medical evidence to show that homosexual behaviour is a learned process" and concludes: "It is an unfortunate fact that the militants amongst the homosexuals are trying to justify their tendencies and thus Clause 28 is required".

If any readers feel inclined to comment on the statements of this

homophobic duo, they can write to them c/o Family & Youth Concern, Wicken, Milton Keynes, Bucks. MK19 6BU.

Another group in the same mould as F&YC and CARE is the National Family Trust, which is backed by substantial resources from that champion of family values the Salvation Army. The NFT has welcomed suggestions that the Government should contain a Minister for the Family with Cabinet rank and praised "encouraging" speeches by Margaret Thatcher and Home Secretary Douglas Hurd.

However, NFT chairman Professor Richard Whitfield is critical of both the Government and the Opposition saying that neither "dare to recognise the implications of the rapidly accelerating pace of family breakdown and social disintegration", and he accuses ministers of actively promoting a "condom culture" and allowing the gay community excessive influence on health education.

NFT's backer, the Salvation Army, makes its own stance on homosexuality clear in its pamphlet 'Positional Statements': "Both male and female homosexual behaviour, promoted and accepted as an alternative life-style, present a serious threat to the integrity, quality and solidarity of society as a whole. [Homosexuals] can be helped to live with the handicap, and even to find deliverance from it. Help may be by medical, social and psychiatric treatment and pre-eminently by submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ." <

PRIDE SUCCESS

This year's Lesbian and Gay Pride Festival at the end of June was a great success and a record number of GALHA members turned out for it. Though the stalls in Kennington Park after the parade were more congested than usual, we attracted a great deal of interest and sold lots of books, magazines and badges to help augment the funds. One of those who took part and helped on the stall was Australian member Bob Turner. Many thanks to him and all the others who lent a hand.

The photo below is of the irrepressible Barbara Smoker visiting our stall in the company of veteran Humanist Harold Blackham. <

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GALHA SPRING WEEKEND GATHERING 1990: ADVANCE NOTICE

Our next spring weekend event will be held at a gay run hotel in Blackpool from 25/28 May. For details and booking form, please write to Secretary, [redacted]

LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

I arrived in the UK seven months ago from South Africa where for the last 14 years I was involved in founding a Rape Crisis organisation, a Battered Women's Shelter, a Feminist organisation and a lesbian line. I was active at a grass roots, political level in the anti-apartheid struggle. I have left South Africa because it has become politically and emotionally impossible for me to work there any more.

During my life there I did a great deal of campaigning, public speaking and public educational work as well as crisis counselling and work in the criminal courts. I am good at that kind of work and enjoy it.

Two of my best friends in South Africa are Humanists and have struggled to keep a small Humanist association alive in Cape Town. I went to a few meetings, but found them dominated by elderly, sexist men and on the whole a waste of time! But I have always been attracted to Humanist thinking.

I have been floundering a bit in London - cultural shock, lack of contacts, difficulty finding work because my skills are specifically geared to SA society, but I am loving it here and learning so much.

I am working voluntarily at the moment for the Women's Environmental Network and once again learning an enormous amount and finding the work very worthwhile.

I picked up a GALHA leaflet at the Pride Festival in Kennington Park and bought a copy of Barbara Smoker's book, and after reading them, felt that that is where I belong!

Anne Mayne, London

LETTER FROM MOSCOW

The monthly magazine Nauka i religiya (Science and Religion) is anxious at present to broaden its field of international co-operation. Our magazine has been in existence for 30 years and is rather popular among its Soviet readers, both atheists and believers. Our distribution figure, which this year reached 530,000, is sufficiently high even for the huge size of the country. [continued on page 26]

TEN GAY AND GLORIOUS YEARS OR ONE DAY IN UTRECHT by Denis Hall

On 3 June, pink ribbons and balloons announced the tenth anniversary of the Dutch Humanist League's Homowerkgroep (gay working group) to the citizens of Utrecht in Holland.

Courtesy of the League, I was there as representative of GALHA and, as it transpired, the only foreign guest speaker at the event.

Those pink balloons were hanging outside the headquarters of the Dutch Humanist League - known as the Erasmushuis. Inside a huge figure '10' wrapped in more pink ribbons dominated the meeting hall.

But the day was not simply to be one of self-congratulation for getting this far. As entirely befitted Humanists, the day was one of speeches and intelligent conversation.

The first item on the agenda was the announcement of the Homowerkgroep's official change of name to Lesbische-Homowerkgroep. There then followed speeches by women on their place in the Humanist League and the lesbian and gay working group.

The speeches were interspersed by songs, a piano and clarinet duet and a wind band, and when these musicians were performing, those present gave them as much attention as they had the previous speaker. It was quite unenglish and very enjoyable.

Lunch does not seem to be very important in Holland and we had to fend for ourselves. I found myself roughing it with the charming Petra Schedler (who visited GALHA national office last year) at the local bakery. This spikey academic countered my enthusiasm for 'Dutch tolerance' with the observation that if her fellow citizens were really that tolerant the working group wouldn't be necessary. Prejudice does exist in the Netherlands.

After a speech by the president of the Dutch Humanist League, it was left to me and an Amsterdam city councillor to focus on the conference's

official theme - the future of the lesbian and gay movement in Europe post 1992.

The European Parliament is both a source of hope and a potential threat. Resolutions strongly supportive of lesbian and gay equality have been approved by the Parliament, but not endorsed by the Council of Ministers. If they had been endorsed, the United Kingdom would now have legislation protecting lesbians and gays not dissimilar to that from Denmark. Honest.

The danger, at its most brutal, arises from the fact that the unification of Europe is a Fascist and Conservative ideal as well as Socialist and Progressive one. Conservative forces see the Parliament as an instrument for their ambitions as clearly as the Progressives do.

Inevitably any analysis of the rights of the homosexual by a British citizen has to focus on the Section 28 saga, which I duly did. But the thrust of my speech was, I hope, representative of the feelings of GALHA on the European question. In short, I said that GALHA hoped the creation of a Humanist European lesbian and gay movement - with the aim of achieving legal and social justice for lesbians and gays as citizens of Europe - will demonstrate to our brothers and sisters across the world that there is a way to liberation - and it is Humanism. <

Scarcely INDEPENDENT

by DAN O'HARA

On 21 July our chairperson [pictured] attended a meeting of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre. The speaker was Andrew Brown, Religious Affairs Correspondent of The Independent .

In dealing with questions after his talk, Brown agreed that it is editorial policy to give extensive coverage to religious and theological issues, and he was gratified by the suggestion that in this respect his paper exceeds the coverage given by the other quality dailies. Two of the Independent's founders were sons of Anglican clergymen - which may help to explain its concentration on Anglican affairs and scant coverage given to the Free Church. Its preoccupation with things Anglican suggests that, if The Church Times were ever to fold, it could easily fill the gap. Readers would complain, said Brown, if the paper gave more prominence to non-conformists. "I don't think Methodists matter", he declared, without

batting an eyelid.

Having myself been frequently irritated by the sheer twaddle churned out by so many of the contributors to its Saturday 'Faith and Reason' column, which Brown commissions, I asked whether he had ever considered opening the column to a Humanist or atheist. He replied that he would not do so. "I can't bear the idea that there is a commonsensical answer to these questions", he said, with stupifying complacency, "that's why I keep atheists out".

Readers who might have thought it worthwhile writing to The Independent to counter some of the nonsense perpetrated by religionists in its columns would be better advised to save their time and energy. The newspaper is just not willing to print anything critical of religious beliefs. And this is the paper that constantly boasts of its independence. Well, really! <

DAN IN CABARET

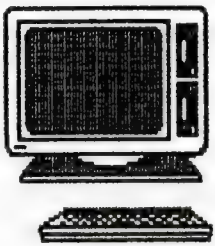
The British Humanist Association's annual conference held in July at the University of Warwick was attended by a number of GALHA members, including some belonging to Warwickshire Humanist Group who helped with the organisation. Information packs about GALHA and lesbian and gay issues (including Section 28) were issued to every participant. The conference theme was "A Caring Society - Involvement or Intrusion" - and among topics discussed were the new Education Reform Act, embryo research and voluntary euthanasia. The highlight of the Saturday evening cabaret was our chairperson Dan O'Hara's rendering of songs by Noel Coward and, in his now familiar role of Dame Floribunda, those made famous by Bea Lillie. Among the books on sale at the conference was the recently published Facing the World, an Anthology of Poetry for Humanists and a leaflet about this is enclosed with this issue of G&LH. The special offer price for this excellent anthology is well worth taking advantage of. <

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

To spot the expert, pick the one who predicts the job will take the longest and cost the most. <

In this, our 10th anniversary year, George has delved into the archives and come up with a year by year account of some of our activities and achievements.

1978



SECRETARY'S ROUND-UP by George Broadhead

THE BEGINNINGS

In the aftermath of the notorious Gay News blasphemy trial in 1977, a few Humanists who are also gay and involved in gay rights campaigning, discuss informally the possibility of setting up a gay Humanist group. Doubts are expressed as to the need for such a group since Humanists have been in the forefront of the struggle to achieve homosexual law reform and the official policies of all the national Humanist organisations are unequivocally supportive of gay rights.

Nevertheless, it is felt that gay people who are not aware of the Humanist outlook would benefit from knowing that there is a long and respectable alternative to the dominant Christian attitude to ethics and one which has contributed to a movement in favour of more liberal ideas about sex.

So in the summer of 1978 some gay Humanists, including myself, decide to have a stall at the CHE conference held in Coventry and to hold a fringe meeting there to discuss the need for an organised group. The bookstall attracts a lot of interest and the meeting, at which Jim Herrick (later to become editor of New Humanist) introduces a discussion, shows that it is worth taking further steps towards setting up a group.

Meanwhile in the great wide world a Mrs Mary Whitehouse begins stating in public that just about everything 'good and true' that 'every decent person believes in' is being undermined by 'the Humanist gay lobby'. That there is no such lobby

and the obvious concern that such an idea provokes provides the spark which convinces us that the opportunity offered to a gay Humanist group is too good to miss.

Also in November of 1978 Terry Sanderson (subsequently well-known for his book 'How to be a Happy Homosexual' and his Gay Times 'Media Watch' column) writes a thought-provoking article in Gay News on the personal advantages and feeling of liberation given by the Humanist outlook.

An ad hoc committee of seven then undertake the necessary preliminaries, and decide to use the name Gay Humanist Group (GHG). A leaflet is drafted, printed and circulated to individuals who have expressed an interest and to many gay groups and publications as well as Humanist organisations.

1979

The Gay Pride march in June from the Embankment to Hyde Park is exceptionally well supported by some 8,000 people and several thousand GHG leaflets are distributed among the crowds. The ad hoc committee decide it would be a good idea to launch the group formally at a special meeting during the August CHE conference at Brighton (CHE conferences are still attracting quite large numbers - around 600 on this occasion) with another stall as at Coventry. The meeting, held at a seafront hotel, is addressed by Freethinker editor Bill McIlroy and a decision is taken to form a group with an annual subscription of £2.00 and a constitution to be drafted by the ad hoc committee which, with one additional member, is elected to serve as the first committee. A press release is issued on the formation of the group.

One of the dramatic events during the conference is the appearance of a half-page display advertisement in the Brighton Evening Argus. This is headed 'Christian Statement on Campaign for Homosexual Equality Conference' and signed by 22 of the town's church leaders. The statement assures homosexuals that "God makes clear what is normal and right and within His purpose and not only this, He offers, through salvation in Christ, real help to overcome unnnatural desires however strong". The advertisement also offers a "confidential counselling service".

This advertisement, coupled with a National Front-type leaflet circulated in Brighton, succeeds in generating an anti-gay atmosphere in the town and our small group are in the vanguard of protest which greets this

outburst of bigotry and includes a zapping of the churches which funded the ad. A GHG delegation engage in a spirited debate with one of the ad's signatories, Rev Robert Picket of the Elim Pentecostal Church Union, and his congregation after their Sunday service.

Throughout the rest of the year the membership of the group continues to grow and, as many members live in the London area, it is decided to hold monthly meetings in the library of Conway Hall Humanist Centre in Red Lion Square. As a kindred organisation we are charged a favourable letting fee by South Place Ethical Society, the owners of the Hall.

In November we produce a 6-page A4 newsletter which features an account of the events at Brighton and the C of E Report on Homosexuality and warns of the 'counselling' activities of the evangelical Christian charity The Pilot Trust (which regrettably still functions ten years later).

1980

At the beginning of 1980 a meeting is held in Birmingham in conjunction with Birmingham Humanist Group. We have been invited to send speakers to CHE groups as far apart as London, Liverpool and Littlehampton, letters from committee members are published in London newspapers and we make contact with the Gay Atheist League of America (GALA).

The author and President of the Writers Guild, Maureen Duffy [pictured], agrees to be the group's Honorary President and gives her first address at our March meeting. "One very important aim for this association", she says, "is to speak up wherever necessary from the rationalist stance, in particular where homosexuals are involved or affected. I think particularly of two recent reports, one emanating from the Anglican Church and one from the Roman Catholic Church, on homosexuality....It could be argued that we should have said nothing at all, because in a sense they were for the internal consumption of those groups....But such pronouncements are not kept simply for the people for whom they are intended. As soon as they appear in the press or are mentioned on television, they become common property; they become liable to influence the whole community. Therefore we cannot be quiet in such a

position, particularly if we feel that what is being said may be hurtful or damaging, certainly unhelpful in some way. And we have to make as bold an attempt to put our view across on the various media as other groups and organisations, because if we don't our views will simply go by default....So it is one of our functions to speak out whenever necessary, and particularly to present the alternative voice". Maureen goes on to say that the second of our functions, as she sees it, is "to make our contribution to the ethics of compassion". Following her talk, which is reported at length in Gay News, Maureen is interviewed on London TV's 'Gay Life' and introduced as GHG President.

Other speakers during the year include NSS President Barbara Smoker, the American journalist Vitto Russo, author of 'The Celluloid Closet', and Antony Grey, former Secretary of the Homosexual Law Reform Society and Director of the Albany Trust.

Antony a fellow Humanist, entitles his talk 'Being Rational About Being Gay' and, with Maureen Duffy's, this is later published in the form of a pamphlet. Antony says that it has become increasingly apparent to him during the 1960s that the basic issues of human rights, civil liberties, freedom to publish and sexual freedom are inseparable and have to be seen as a whole. "Certainly our most vociferous enemies see them that way - they're against the lot!"...Goodness is not confined to believing Christians, nor are such people more immune to evil behaviour than anyone else. The belief that the contrary is so is perverse and irrational and flies in the face of history. If we have to choose between believing that all human beings have the potential for good and most of them recognise that goodness and happiness are connected in ways which have nothing to do with any supernatural power, or else that people are born with a natural inclination to be evil unless they are 'saved' by religion, I know that the first seems more sensible to me."

On campaigning, Antony says: "Constantly having to combat irrational and dangerous thinking is strenuous and sometimes tedious, but not necessarily boring. It can be fun. And as no-one else is doing it as consistently and effectively as is neccesary, I hope that GHG will concentrate on a demolition job of much of the silly rubbish that is still spouted about homosexuality".

The group's activities during the course of the year include drawing up a lengthy submission to the Government's Policy Advisory Committee on the Age of Consent, attending a meeting at the House of Commons to discuss

the John Saunders case and challenging Rev Eddie Stride, the chairman of the Nationwide Festival of Light (or Blight as it is known in many circles), on that malign organisation's homophobic propaganda.

We also take part for the first time in the gay pride celebrations in London and have a stall and fringe meeting at CHE's conference in York.

1981

The group's newsletter expands into a 12 page mini-magazine titled 'The Gay Humanist', Maureen Colquhoun, the out lesbian MP, gives a much publicised talk at Conway Hall. The group makes a submission to the Government's Committee on Blasphemy Law, and holds a debate with members of the Gay Christian Movement. At a GHG fringe meeting and stall at the Durham Gayfest our badges with slogans like 'LEAD ME INTO TEMPTATION, PLEASE!', 'RELIGION IS THE PROBLEM, NOT THE ANSWER' and 'I'M A BORN-AGAIN ATHEIST' are best-sellers.

1982

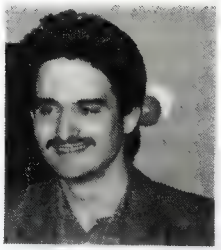
Our main initiative this year is the setting up of POPE - People Opposed to Papal Edicts - to protest at the anti-gay stance of the Catholic Church during the Pope's visit to Britain. We enlist the support of other Humanist and gay organisations, including the National Secular Society and CHE, and help organise a press conference and demonstration. Under the headline 'They Shame Us All', Sunday Express editor, and arch homophobe, Sir John Junor, refers to the protest as involving "a motley collection of pro-abortionists, "gay" Humanists, supposed "feminists" and the whole progressive ragbag of radical chic"!

This year we also make our first contact with our Dutch equivalent, the Homowerkgroep within the Dutch Humanist League and one of our most successful meetings is a 'Political Forum' in which representatives of the four main gay party political groups are invited to put their point of views and answer questions from the audience.

1983

We challenge the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) to a debate on the motion 'Do Gays Need God?' and write to all members of Coventry City Council about the ban imposed on this year's Gayfest being held in the city. We become an associate member of the International Humanist and

Ethical Union (IHEU) and publish a booklet 'An Introduction to Secular Humanism'. The winter issue of The Gay Humanist features the first in a regular film/TV column by Jonathan Sanders [pictured], later TV columnist for Gay Times.



1984

We write a letter of complaint to Cardinal Hume following the latest statement from the Vatican describing homosexuality as "a moral disorder", and acquire eight vice-presidents, including jazz singer George Melly [pictured] who tells us that although he is "an ex-gay", he remains a Humanist! We hold a joint meeting with the Gay Black Group and begin a series of talks entitled 'Notable Gay Humanists' with Stephen Coote (Editor of The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse) on John Addington Symonds, and Maureen Duffy on E M Forster. We organise our first weekend event in Pilton, Somerset, and celebrate our fifth anniversary with a party at Conway Hall. The British Humanist Association publishes an educational booklet on Humanism with several references to homosexuality.

1985

GHG sends letters to councillors, MPs, and the national and local press in protest at Rugby Borough Council's ban on employing lesbians and gays. We attend a council debate in which Methodist Council leader Gordon Collett reaffirms his belief that homosexuality does not conform to Christian principles and treats his audience to a quotation from Leviticus. We also take part in the mass protest rally held in the town in November. The council climbs down. We make a submission to the working party drafting the GLC's London Charter for Lesbian & Gay Rights and narrowly thwart attempts by gay Christians to remove or substantially water down the section on Organised Religion which asserts that "homophobia remains a characteristic of much of the past and present teaching" of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We enlist the help of our kindred Humanist organisations in the UK and the International Humanist Ombudsman in the Gay's The Word bookshop case and have a collection for this campaign at one of our meetings. For our special gay pride meeting held at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, we invite Andrew Hodges,

author of a biography of Alan Turing, to talk about this gay atheist computer wizard. We welcome five members of the Dutch Humanist League's Homowerkgroep to our weekend event in Brighton and send two representatives to a gathering of the International Humanist & Ethical Youth Organisation in Belgium. Nine GHG members attend the Homowergroep's autumn conference in the Netherlands.

1986

We react swiftly to an outburst from a West Midlands councillor who claims at a council meeting that God has sent AIDS to get rid of "poofs and queers" and, largely through the efforts of Birmingham member Frank Boulton, manage to get a recorded phone message on AIDS advertised by the Christadelphian Ecclesia withdrawn. The message claimed that "AIDS originates with the perverted behaviour of homosexuals and by various means it can spread to other people." Keith Brewster, editor of the Terrence Higgins Trust newsletter, comments: "GHG have supported the efforts of the Trust without stint and we must be particularly grateful to them for their watchfulness where a particular sub-sect is concerned...I feel that it is a great pity that church leaders have to leave it to the Humanist movement to control their bigots." We protest to Central Television and the British Association for Counselling about the publicity given to the homophobic 'counselling' service True Freedom Trust in a religious programme screened by the company.

We are one of the few groups to respond to the appeal from New Zealand gays to combat the homophobic activity of the Salvation Army, the leading opponents of law reform in that country. Letters are sent from GHG to the SA headquarters in London, to the New Zealand High Commissioner and one of encouragement to the New Zealand MP introducing the Reform Bill. We also urge (via the gay press) British lesbians and gays to refrain from contributing to the SA's funds. A minibus load of GHG members descend on Nottingham with banner to take part in a rally protesting at the Labour Council's veto on lesbian and gay equal opportunities.

Dutch gay Humanist Kees Waaldijk speaks on 'A Humanist Contribution to the Gay Fight' at a Burns night meeting in Edinburgh hosted by the editor of Gay Scotland, Ian Dunn, and as usual a sizeable contingent of GHG members attend the annual dinner of the National Secular Society at which the guest-of-honour is Jo Richardson MP. The gay film director Derek Jarman is one of our guest speakers at Conway Hall and is interviewed by Jonathan Sanders for The Gay Humanist. We send two delegates to the

International Gay Youth Congress (Pink Youthquake) in Oslo.

1987

The Roman Catholic Church repeats its condemnation of homosexuality in a document issued by The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (originally the dreaded Inquisition). The document describes "the particular inclination of the homosexual person" as "a more or less strong tendency towards an intrinsically moral evil". In a press release GHG comments: "The sophistry which allows the Roman Catholic Church to condemn homosexuality as evil, while calling on its bishops to provide pastoral care is utterly contemptible."

Our president, Maureen Duffy, is one of the speakers at the Terrence Higgins Trust candlelight gathering in London's Jubilee Gardens. The co-operative printing firm we have been using to print The Gay Humanist refuses to print the Winter 1986/7 issue unless a photograph of two men in nuns' habits is removed. The Freethinker describes the firm as "censorious misery-guts" and is in turn slammed by two GH readers for its misogyny and sexism. The controversy also gets an airing in the Coventry Evening Telegraph and The Guardian. We find another printer. One of our longstanding members Laurence Collinson, a founder member of the Gay News collective and Gay Sweatshop, dies. We take part with banner in the demonstration held in Wombourne, Staffordshire to protest at a local councillor who has recommended gays be gassed.

GHG and other Humanist organisations, including the BHA, condemns the viciously anti-gay "cesspit" speech of Greater Manchester's Catholic Chief Constable James Anderton. After a Kenilworth Baptist pastor publicly declares his support for Anderton, there ensues a furious and prolonged exchange of letters from Christians and Humanists in the local paper. GHG together with the BHA and NSS as well as a number of prominent

Humanists, lends its support to the Legislation for Lesbian and Gay Rights Campaign.

We 'Red Star' our text for a lesbian/gay "affirmation" ceremony to Channel 4 for use in its programme Network 7. The ceremony features the first close-up gay smootcher on TV and provokes outrage from Mary Whitehouse and her supporters in parliament. The GHG text is used again for the mass gay wedding held at London's Hippodrome nightclub. We make a donation to become a Special Friend of Pride. We send a message of solidarity to the Papal Visit Task Force on the eve of the Pope's visit to San Francisco. With sponsorship from his fellow GHG members, Peter French successfully completes a half marathon run in aid of London Lighthouse. We back the UK AIDS Vigil Organisation. We hold a Special General Meeting to change our name from Gay Humanist Group to Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association.

1988

National Humanist organisations publicly declare their strong opposition to Clause 28 and GALHA takes part with banner in the huge demonstration against the Clause held in Manchester. We take action when Birmingham councillor Alan Blumenthal announces that openly gay teachers should be banned from the city's schools once Clause 28 becomes law. The councillor says he shares the view of the Archbishop of Canterbury that gays should have relationships, "but without acts which are condemned in the Bible."

Along with other Humanist organisations we protest to the Post Office Chairman about the 'Jesus is Alive!' slogans being stamped on our outgoing and incoming mail. Many individual members complain also and, although the slogan is not withdrawn, the Post Office obviously learns its lesson. GALHA is invited to join the Humanist Liaison Committee, which includes representatives from the BHA, NSS and SPES.

Talks at Conway Hall include one by the eminent author Francis King on gay writers he has known. A resolution condemning Section 28 proposed by GALHA and the Dutch Humanist League is carried at the IHEU Congress in America. IHEU calls on its member organisations and its representatives at the UN and Council of Europe to help get Section 28 repealed. Dutch GALHA member, Kees Waaldijk, attends the International Lesbian & Gay Association conference in Oslo and presents (on behalf of Homostudies Utrecht) the Iceberg project to uncover and combat discrimination against lesbians and gays in Europe. For the third successive year, GALHA acts as

co-sponsor (with CHE) for the London Lesbian and Gay Winter Fair. We are invited to supply material for a wedding exhibition on show at Sheffield's Mappin Art Gallery from September and touring galleries throughout the north next year. The Gay and Lesbian Humanist reveals that budding US President George Bush is "not very high on atheists". Maureen Duffy successfully proposes a motion at the TUC Congress in Bournemouth deploring the passing of Section 28 as an infringement of the basic right to free speech and expression. A PhD student from a Dutch university visits national office in Kenilworth and spends the best part of a week going through the GALHA archives.

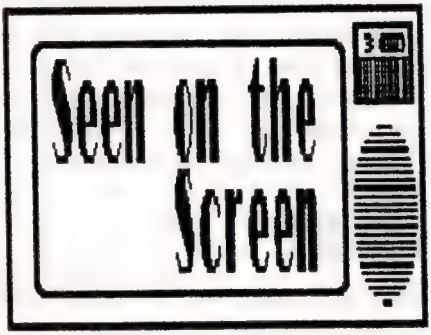
1989

GALHA acts against a leaflet being distributed in Birmingham which stresses the role of the family and "religious values" in combatting AIDS. We issue a press statement defending author Salman Rushdie against death threats from Islamic fundamentalists and another one supporting the statement against the extension of the archaic blasphemy law made by the Campaign Against Blasphemy Law. Two prominent Humanists, BHA President Sir Hermann Bondi and Jo Richardson MP [pictured], are signatories to a letter urging the Director of the London School of Economics to agree to a plaque being erected in commemoration of the founding of the Gay Liberation Front. GALHA committee member Denis Hall represents us at the Dutch gay Humanists' 10th anniversary celebrations in Utrecht. <

COMMITTEE AGAINST BLASPHEMY LAW

The Committee Against Blasphemy Law, formed in 1977 following the trial for blasphemous libel of the editor and publishers of Gay News, has been revived. The Committee is campaigning to prevent the extension of blasphemy law, and in opposition to other forms of encroachment on freedom of speech and publication. Associate membership is open to all who agree with CABL's aims. Details are obtainable from the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer (B. McIlroy, [redacted]). The Committee is organising a public meeting at Conway Hall in London on Friday evening, 20 October 1989. <

TELEVISION REVIEWS BY DIESEL BALAAM



Channel 4's SURVIVOR'S GUIDE series - yet another of those interminable chat shows that don't really go anywhere - chose as one of its subjects the realms of sexuality, with two groups, one of men and one of women, discussing the subject either side of the commercial break. The first all-male group, consisting of an articulate white heterosexual, a taciturn black heterosexual, a simpering celibate and a token queen, suffered from inept chairing and a reluctance to open up, with the white hettie dominating the discussion. To be fair, he did invite participation from the other three, but their input to the programme was minimal, and it has to be said that the experiences of the young gay man sounded rather squalid in comparison to those of the others.

Much more satisfying was the all-female discussion, which positively fizzed along with humour and candour. Here the lesbian participant was very much to the fore, refreshingly careful not to denigrate men, her own heterosexual experiences or those of other women, but boldly proclaiming the joys of lesbian sex as superior to being 'stuffed'. Whether intentional or not, one of the few merits of the programme was the contrast between the awkwardness of the male group, which tended to reinforce the barriers between them, and the ease with which the female group began to dissolve those barriers through candid discussion.

Like Halley's comet, that hoary old film VICTIM came round yet again, this time on Channel 4 - though I'm completely at a loss to understand why this obsolete period piece holds such an attraction for those in charge of programme schedules. Admittedly the film does star Dirk Bogarde and Sylvia Syms, but nevertheless it looks increasingly ridiculous as the years roll by (you are meant to find it funny, aren't you?). No doubt this was regarded as a daring plea for tolerance when the film was made several years before the 1967 Act, but the stilted drawing-room confrontations, the one-dimensional characters and the unrelenting gloom in which homosexual men are presented as pathetic, cowardly creatures,

deserving pity and charitable tolerance, is not what we need or want to see in 1989 when there is so much more to be addressed. Of course, much of the above can be ascribed to the law and the resulting blackmail of that time, but there was nothing to suggest that gay life might have had its compensations - love, sex and companionship for example. In fact, the only redeeming feature of this dreary piece of celluloid is the revelation that the blackmailers, a young hoodlum and a hatchet-faced Mary Whitehouse lookalike, operate from a Christian standpoint - a "filthy blasphemy" she called it! Some things never change.

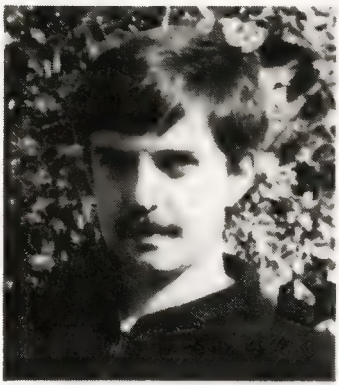
The dreadful DONAHUE (ITV) reared his ugly head again, once more focussing his unwelcome attention on gay people with a highly dubious debate about the 'causes of homosexuality' - a rather reactionary starting point to discuss something as intricate and mysterious as human sexuality. One of the guests, a Dr Richard Green, who is apparently the author of a book called 'The Sissy Boy Syndrome' claimed that three-quarters of effeminate boys become gay or bisexual - "It must be awful to be effeminate!" quipped Donahue - (actually it's a lot of fun!), while others advanced the usual hackneyed 'absent father' theories and so on. Coupled with a silly self-confessed 'ex-lesbian' who realised that "homosexuality is not the created design of God" it all made for pretty dismal viewing. Needless to say, the glaringly obvious - i.e. that there are as many sexualities as there are people, and that heterosexual and homosexual individuals and behaviour are not really all that dissimilar, eluded everyone.

ITV's hair salon sitcom, starring the odious Anita Dobson, provided us with yet another bland and sanitised queen in the mould of EASTENDERS' Colin. Much of the programme was taken up with Herbie sparring verbally with the homophobic jibes of a YTS trainee, but Herbie's raison d'etre was otherwise to act as friend, primper and confidante to straight female clients, principally Dobson, who is torn between her wealthy American fiance and a stud stylist. Herbie, meanwhile, seems to have no real personal life of his own and is thus just the sort of 'safe' gay man many straight women viewers adore.

Slightly more serious but still unsatisfactory, were the representations of gay men in two imported TV series from the USA. LA LAW (ITV) used the case of Matt - an Olympic champion - who decides to 'come out' after signing a contract to endorse a breakfast cereal. He is then sued by the company in question, as they believe he no longer represents the 'masculine' image they wish their product to be associated with. The

tension mounts when we learn that Judge O'Neil is a closeted homosexual and was specially chosen by the defence counsel in the belief that he is likely to be sympathetic to Matt's case. In fact, he eventually rules in favour of the company, but not before Matt's lawyer threatens the judge with blackmail in an unlikely out-of-court scene. Matt nobly resists the pressure to twist the judge's arm, saying "That man has as much right to stay private as I do to go public," - allowing our hero to emerge from the whole sorry affair with all his liberal credentials intact (if not his common sense).

Meanwhile, HOOPERMAN (ITV) brought a homosexual theme to the trusty 'identical twin' script device, when Bobby - the homophobic brother of gay policeman Rick - turned up advising his brother to go see a shrink. Rick's groan-worthy rebuttal "this is not a disease, it's a choice - I like being gay" just goes to prove how little the show's (obviously straight) script-writers understand gayness, as given the steadily accruing evidence to support genetic predisposition (for all forms of sexuality), I can't see that choice really comes into it. The new stereotypes of gay men and women we see on television are certainly more well-meaning than in the days when 'Victim' was made, but judging from this dismal crop of programmes, our representation on TV remains at best, issue-based, at worst, one-dimensional and facile. <



Diesel Balaam

[From page 10]. Our major objective is the propagation of the scientific outlook. From this viewpoint we examine a wide variety of problems: religious, social and natural. We make our pages available for the expression of contrasting opinions. Our authors include well-known scientists and writers. We base our principles on tolerance of conflicting opinions and trying to get a clear understanding of opponents' ideas.

We shall be glad to offer space in our magazine for your contribution; on the other hand we would be pleased to have the opportunity to place an article in your magazine. Of special interest to us are problems of the freedom of thought and the humanistic movement.

V. Pravotorov, Chief Editor, Moscow.

BOOKS

ACKERLEY
by Peter Parker
(Constable, £16.95) Published September 1989

Those who attended my GALHA talk on J.R.Ackerley and Francis King's talk about his literary friends last year may have heard enough about the author of Hindoo Holiday, My Dog Tulip and We Think the World of You (the film of which is finally scheduled for release in late September). But I make no apology for previewing Peter Parker's scholarly and highly entertaining biography which confirms my view of Ackerley [pictured] as a radical gay man (for his time) who was also, Parker states, "a convinced atheist". The writer and GALHA vice-president Sir Angus Wilson places Ackerley in an English literary tradition of "ironic mockery" which rejects "Victorian institutions and Victorian Christianity, then (questions) all family life..." Parker adds that "this stream is a homosexual one, temperamentally antipathetic, as it were, to traditional Christian family values".

The biography reveals that Ackerley thought Billy Graham, one of whose rallies he attended with a friend, "a dreadful creature" and that the atmosphere of the rally was fascist. During WW2, when the Guards Chapel was hit by a bomb during divine service, Ackerley blamed King George VI for implying in a radio broadcast that God was on the side of the British! We also learn that the usually misogynistic Joe liked May Buckingham (wife of E.M.Forster's policeman lover Bob) partly because of her "forthright atheism". The volume includes extracts from Ackerley's poems, at least two of which are strongly anti-Christian in tone; indeed, one line of Micheldever - "The rich the richer and the grander grew,/And parson licked their arse..." - had to be altered to please the printers. It's no surprise that when the young Ackerley once posed as Christ for a painter friend's canvas to be called Christ Leaving the Home of His Mother, the

artist - after several days sketching - had to retitle it The Prodigal Son Leaving Home!

Long before he left his own home, itself to become the subject of sexual intrigue, Ackerley embarked on his promiscuous search for "the Ideal Friend" whom he unexpectedly found in his beloved Alsatian bitch Queenie. However unfulfilled he was sexually, he never ascribed his difficulties to his gayness per se and indeed throughout his life he made courageous public protests against society's treatment of homosexuals. In a signed book review in 1957 Ackerley interpolated a criticism of the Wolfenden Report's feebleness, particularly its recommendation of 21 as the age of consent for homosexual men. Parker also gives a fascinating blow-by-blow account of some of Ackerley's battles against the BBC's Prudery and Philistinism (especially in gay matters) during his career as radio Talks Producer and, later, Literary Editor of The Listener.

I asked Peter Parker how he became interested in Ackerley. "A schoolmaster lent me My Father and Myself and We Think when I was 18 in 1973. I didn't immediately take to them, but when Ackerley's letters were published in 1975 I was amazed by his wonderfully self-deprecatory attitude. I particularly admired his letter to Stephen Spender in which he wrote, 'I think that life is so important and, in its workings, so upsetting that nobody should be spared.' I learnt this like poetry. It's the essence of Ackerley - he's not just being bloody-minded. And, of course, the last person he spared was himself."

In the biography Parker emphasises Ackerley's belief in the importance of life: "He had no real belief in any after-life and so thought people had to make the most of the temporal one they undeniably had." In his sixties Ackerley did try to understand Buddhism (prompted by a flirtation with a "pretty young Buddhist priest") but concluded that it was too self-searching.

Such a charge might well be levelled at Ackerley too - all his books are to some degree autobiographical, culminating in the posthumously published My Father and Myself which, according to May Buckingham (Parker tells me), so shocked E.M.Forster that he used to hide his copy! Ackerley claimed to be shocked by the Bible: "It's absolutely filthy - a Dirty Book! Fornication, incest, bestiality - it's got the lot!" Prospective readers of Parker's biography may (or may not) be relieved to know that, though frank about its subject's sex life, it does not approach the obscenity of the holy book.

LADS: Love Poetry of the Trenches.
Edited & introduced by Martin Taylor
(Constable, £12.95)

The soldier-poets of World War One are often crudely and inaccurately categorised, on the basis of their best-known poems, as pro-War (e.g. Rupert Brooke) or anti-War (e.g. Wilfred Owen). But here we have an anthology that presents their work from an emotional and homoerotic perspective with subgroupings like "Youth in Arms" and "The Enemy" that focus the feelings expressed in the poetry even more sharply. In his 43-page introduction Martin Taylor is, however, careful not to imply that the poems or their authors are invariably homosexual, describing the typical relationship between men in the trenches as "sexually innocent" - a hackneyed phrase I dislike for its corollary of sexual guilt. But there is no doubt that Taylor is on our side in the battle against homophobia; Robert Graves, for example, is criticised for embracing "a religious heterosexuality" and dismissing Wilfred Owen as "a passive homosexual weakling". Indeed, Taylor's whole introduction is remarkably perceptive in its delineation of the many subtle shades of male bonding experienced and poeticised in the trenches.

Taylor also places the First World War poetry in the context of earlier literary traditions and brings into consideration some of the prose that certain soldier-poets (like Sassoon and Graves) also published about their war experiences. Brief biographical details are given, but I would have welcomed some annotation (apart from the introduction) of the poems themselves - dates, where known, would have been useful, for example. Taylor contrasts the poetry with the "blind patriotism" of the contemporary propagandist songs, though the title he refers to as "We don't want to lose you but we think you ought to go" is of course "Your King and Country Want You" (not to be confused with the more urgent and quite different song that replaced it, "Your King and Country Need You"). He is also somewhat inaccurate in stating that this and similar songs were "invariably sung by women"; there are recordings of men performing "Your King and Country Want You" but with the singer's promise of cheers, thanks and kisses for the soldier on his return changed to cheers, thanks and blessings!

The poems themselves - about 150 of them - represent a wide range of authors and, though the anthology confirms the superiority of Owen and Sassoon, there are many excellent poems by others; those by Ewart Alan Mackintosh (1893-1917) have an emotional honesty and intensity that I

find particularly eloquent. One feels that he - and no doubt most of the soldier-poets - wrote for personal therapy as much as public statement, expressing in verse the feelings that men, especially Englishmen, find difficult to speak. David Jones' "In Parenthesis" contains one of the few explicitly gay references: "...two lovers from Ebury Bridge,/Bates and Coldpepper/that men called the Lily-white boys."

This anthology is recommended to all interested in the subject. It is well-produced, with discreetly evocative woodcut illustrations, and by today's standards is reasonably priced for a quality hardback. <

OBITUARIES

We are saddened to report the death of four members.

Pat Maguire, who lived in Wales, died earlier this year when only in his thirties. He had been a member of GALHA for four years and was a familiar figure with his motor bike at our weekend events.

Henry Stuart Lisle from Worthing, who joined in 1984, died in July at the age of 75. Henry worked for most of his life as a landscape gardener and was fond of recollecting the work he did some years ago for the actor Dirk Bogarde. He has made a bequest to GALHA for which we are extremely grateful.

Eric Prince died in July, also at the age of 75. Eric had worked in London for the publishing firm Hamish Hamilton before retiring three years ago with his partner of 43 years to a country cottage in Gloucestershire. We extend our deepest sympathy to his partner and fellow GALHA member, Norman Fishwick.

Michael Ritterman died in August aged 79. Michael came from Austria and being both gay and Jewish, suffered at the hands of the Nazis before the last war. As reported in our Spring '89 issue, he was interviewed about his traumatic experience in Channel 4's Out on Tuesday programme which chronicled the Nazi persecution of lesbians and gays.

Humanist funeral ceremonies were arranged by GALHA for Henry and Eric.

H MONTGOMERY HYDE

Harford Montgomery Hyde, who has died at the age of 81, was a prolific author, a barrister and, for nine years, a courageously independent-

minded Unionist MP for North Belfast at Westminster. He was also a Humanist, an Honorary Associate of the Rationalist Press Association, and a great champion of gay rights.

Hyde was a staunch supporter of the campaign to achieve homosexual law reform in the 50s and 60s and, along with many other prominent Humanists, a sponsor of Towards a Charter of Homosexual Rights published by the Campaign for Reason in 1978. In 1970 he wrote: "my personal belief is that homosexuals' complete social acceptance here is only a matter of time...[and their love] may in the fullness of time come into its own without fear and without reproach as the expression of a satisfying and socially acceptable human relationship."

Such views hardly endeared him to his Ulster constituents. He had already outraged many in the Unionist party when he took his seat by announcing that William of Orange was gay. Despite successive five-figure majorities at the polls, he was finally "deselected" by the local party before the 1959 General Election.

Hyde was called on several times to defend people charged under the Obscene Publications Act and, a member of the Howard League for Penal Reform, was prominent in the campaign for the abolition of the death penalty.

In more than half a century as a biographer and authority on criminology and espionage, he published some fifty books, which ranged in subject matter from Joseph Stalin to Liberace. He published fine biographies of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas and, in 1970, a historical and contemporary survey of homosexuality in Britain, The Other Love. <

WISE WORDS

Delay is preferable to error.

Credits

GAY & LESBIAN HUMANIST [redacted]

This issue produced by George Broadhead, Brett Humphreys and Roy Saich, with news reports by George Broadhead.

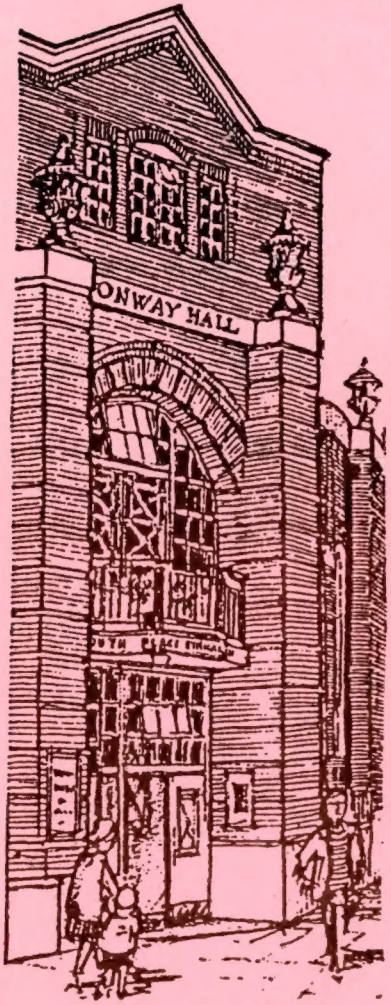
YOU CAN HELP TOO!

Cuttings, cartoons, articles and letters are always welcome. Please send any contributions to: The Editors, GALHA, [redacted]

Tel. Kenilworth [redacted].

EVENTS

GALHA REGULAR EVENTS SECOND FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH
7.30pm Library (1st floor) Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. ALL WELCOME.
Nearest station: Holborn.



8 SEPTEMBER: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by SOCIAL with snacks and wine.

13 OCTOBER: MEETING with speaker BARBARA SMOKER on NUNS, MONKS AND THEIR SEXUALITY.

11 NOVEMBER: MEETING with speaker PETER BURTON, Gay Times features editor, on LIONS AND SHADOWS (talk about Christopher Isherwood).

8 DECEMBER (from 8.00 pm): WINTER SOLSTICE PARTY with seasonal food, drink and entertainment. Admission £3.00.

12 JANUARY 1990: DISCUSSION/SOCIAL MEETING.

OTHER MEETINGS AND EVENTS

SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER from 8.00 pm: GALHA 10th ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION, library, Conway Hall. Buffet, wine and soft drinks. Special guests. Admission £3.00.

SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER from 10.30 am: WINTER PRIDE, incoporating the CHE & GALHA WINTER FAIR, ULU building, Malet Street, London - DAY TIME MARKET & EVENING ENTERTAINMENT.

Secretary George Broadhead and Treasurer Roy Saich: Kenilworth (0926) 58450.
Chairperson Daniel O'Hara: London (01) [redacted]
London Contacts Denis Hall: (01) [redacted] and Peter Lee: London (01) [redacted].

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Kenilworth, [redacted]